

## POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

All communications and inquiries should be addressed to

W. C. STEELE,  
Switzerland, Florida.

### Can the Capon Successfully be Used as a Brooder?

We have recommended capons as profitable for market and as desirable for home use on account of the superior quality of their flesh. But here is a new use for them: a writer, in the Poultry Gazette, says that they make the best brooders for your chicks. If they will mother the chicks at all they would not desert them so early as many hens do. Often a hen will begin to lay before her chicks are large enough to wean. If the capon would care for them at all he would stay with them until they were grown. The Gazette article is as follows:

Of late there has been not a little said in the poultry papers in regard to the capon and his advanced market value. Enough has been said to show to every one that this is the more profitable way to handle poor, ordinary and common cockerels. Every poultryman who desires to improve the quality in his flock should be induced to try caponizing.

It is generally supposed that the market is the only place where Mr. Capon has any value. This is a mistake that I will undertake to show you, as the market is not the only place, where capons are valuable.

Have any of you ever thought to use the capon as a mother for your little chicks, especially those hatched in the incubator early in February and March? Coop him 24 hours without feed or water and then give him the chicks. Feed and water at the same time; tap with end of finger on floor of coop and listen to him cluck. He will keep the chicks where other fowls cannot bother them and in a few days you will see that he is as proud of the little ones as ever Mrs. Biddy is and he will care for them just as carefully and at the same time grow enough to make it profitable to carry him over till he is nearly two years old before he is put on the market.

To those who have been slow about buying an incubator on account of having no confidence in a brooder and afraid they could not have a hen that they could give the chicks to, I will say the capon will, if rightly handled, accept and mother chicks after he has nearly become an adult, and his second years' growth will be about one-half that of the first year if he is handled carefully and not stunted, i. e., starved.

But the value of the capon does not stop with this. He is valuable to the fancier. In the show room with a pen of five capons of each variety he who breeds the fancier can show how severe the culling of his flock has been and especially if these capons run well up in the large numbers and if he has culled all of the flock that are poorer than these five and those that are their equal. You say it takes nerve to do this. Well, I don't know as it does. It requires more nerve for me to write this article than it does for me to go out and weed out the common and poor birds from my flock, because I know that after they are caponized they are not as much bother for me as even the hen and pullets are and then my cock birds are much better on the average than I enjoy culling and that very close. Just try it for the benefit of the experiment and see if you do not have more confidence in yourself after that. And if you do bear in mind that it will also give you satisfied customers—that is if you sell at reasonable prices. It seems to me that some breeders' prices are made solely with the object of keeping their birds at home, while with some buyers it seems they do not want a bird that can be bought for \$25 or \$30, even if they knew the

bird was equal in every respect of one that would cost them \$100 or more. Some men are handling fancy poultry more for the pleasure than the profit they derive therefrom and as a result these men sell for a more moderate price. Having run the gauntlet along this line I have learned that with this class of breeders quality is the first and price to cover cost of production, with a moderate profit, is all they ask. But then it is not very low and moderate price you see that has the quality of superior worth back of it, but to this end quality all along the line is what the capon in the show room will sooner or later lead us to.

### Things Which Hold Profits Down.

We hardly think that any of our readers are so very foolish as to do any of the things described, in an article which we find in Poultry. Sell all extra cockerels as soon as they are large enough to bring a fair price as broilers. Never sell any early pullets unless you have many more than you can keep over. In that case keep the choice ones and sell the culls.

There are about five millions of poultry keepers in this country. Of course it is impossible to guess how many of these keep pure-bred poultry or how many of them might truthfully be called fanciers. By fancier I mean the poultry keeper who breeds his fowls in the expectation of selling eggs for hatching and birds for breeders. Probably about one in one-hundred poultry keepers might fairly be said to be fanciers. The point is unimportant except that what I am going to say will be directed particularly to market poultry keepers, those who keep poultry for what can be made from it at market prices for poultry and eggs.

These market poultry keepers are not making as much from their flocks as they should or as they might with a little more attention to their business. There are several common practices which reduce possible profits very materially.

Some of these have been referred to in these columns. For instance keeping a lot of surplus cockerels after they are old enough to sell as broilers, only to sell them later at no better price than they would have commanded when of broiler size.

Another profit-destroying practice to which I have called the attention of poultry keepers is keeping hens after they begin to decline, which usually occurs at the end of their second summer.

Another and very common practice which is detrimental to the interests of the poultry keeper is selling the first or earliest of the pullets, trusting to later hatches for stock to keep as layers.

Nothing could be more shortsighted than this. It is a great temptation to sell to have a nice plump lot of early hatched pullets, for which one can get a good price. The later hatches are coming on and winter seems a long way off. One is likely to reason that the younger pullets will have time to fully mature before the cold weather comes and let the earliest of the pullets go for market, while a good price is offered.

It should be remembered that a fowl is not fully matured the day it seems to have attained to its full size. It is rare to have a pullet lay immediately after we think she is old enough to begin. Many times a pullet will seem to be fully matured and yet she does not begin laying. Her comb becomes red and she sings as she scratches for feed but the looked-for eggs are not found. Such a pullet has probably grown to full size and is fully equipped with plumage but the maturity that results in reproduction is not attained and until it is she will not produce eggs.

A good many of the ninety-nine one-hundredths of the poultry keepers of this country to whom I am addressing these words trust too much to Providence. Old Oliver Cromwell was a firm believer in Providence, but at

the same time he advised his soldiers to keep their powder dry.

The poultry keeper should follow the same plan. He is fully justified in trusting in Providence to so order things that the greatest good will come to the largest number, but he should remember that his little personal affairs are of small account in the plan of the universe.

The pagan Greeks understood these things pretty well. They had a saying that the gods help those who help themselves, which applies to the present day very nicely. The poultryman who sits down and expects the powers that be to take care of him will get about as good results as Josh Billings said would come to the man who goes into the field and sits down on a stone to wait for the cow to back up and be milked.

If I have a nice lot of well grown pullets, just exactly ripe for the broiler and another lot which promise to be just as nice when they have arrived at the same age, I would be foolish to trust to Providence, luck or any occult happening, and sell the big pullets for market.

Many a poultry keeper who walls about his bad luck is the cause of his own disasters by accepting good prices for what he is sure of, trusting to have more just as good a little later.

Keep the earlier pullets if you would have eggs next winter and if the later ones come along all right sell them.

### Poultry Keeping a Woman's Business.

A woman writing sends, to Poultry, her ideas on this subject. There is a lot of sound common sense in what she says. Read it carefully.

When I see an article which says that poultry keeping is a delightful business for delicate women, invalid old men and toddling children, it makes me smile—no, not smile, I simply grin clear back to my ears. One would think to read some of the things one finds in the papers that poultry keeping was a tea and toast sort of business just fit for a man who was too lazy to work and too proud to beg. Invalid women, decrepit old men and infants should not be expected to attend to any of the serious labors of life. The women should devote what energy they have to getting well, the old men should sit down and rest and the children should not have a thing to do but learn things and play.

There is more of the kind of talk my big brother calls "guff" in circulation about the poultry business than about any other occupation under the sun, or above it either, for that matter. When any one comes around and begins to talk about accomplishing anything without work I think of some of the advertisements we see about "Easy work at home." If anyone thinks making money out of poultry is like "getting money from mother"—more of the big brother talk—he or she or it is mistaken.

You may think that I am not in favor of poultry keeping for women. Bless you, if a good many women in this country would get out and take care of a flock of chickens, instead of spending most of their time cooking "good things" with which to spoil the health of their men folk, there would not be so many sallow-faced, flat-chested women mourning around, nor so many men looking for second wives. I don't know of a business that is better fitted for women than keeping poultry. It fills a long-felt want to perfection. The women of this country inhale too much steam from tea-kettles in hot kitchens and get too little opportunity to get out of doors and get tanned and muscular. I am a believer in muscular Christianity myself and I believe it is as good for women as for men.

If ever I happen to get married—and I hope I shall not wander down this vale of woe alone forever—I shall have an ironclad agreement, sealed and witnessed with bell, book and candle, with my prospective partner that I am not to be expected to spoil my beauty



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and wither my youthful vigor by standing over a hot stove stewing things and myself in order that I may feed him into becoming cross and disagreeable. It is going to be a part of the bargain that I am to have and hold for my own use and behoof a certain number of chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese, and that the revenues and profits of the same together with all increase and addition shall be mine to keep, give away, sell or bequeath, together with all the products thereof. Not that I care about the ducks and geese but I shall cover the whole ground so as to have something with which to bargain whenever I desire the other half to this agreement, the party of the second part, as it were, to grant me concessions, outside the general purpose of this particular deal.

Women and poultry belong together. A woman who doesn't love pets and like to have things dependent on her is hard to find and when she is found she is not a thing of beauty. Poultry requires just the deftness that comes natural to women in order to do its level best. If you don't believe this just go into a flock of chickens that has been tended by a woman and clump around man fashion for ten minutes and the chances are those hens will not lay for two days afterward. I have seen some very affecting pictures of loving hens cuddled about the persons of their lady owners, but I don't want any of that sort of poultry work in mine. Hens are not at all particular about wiping their feet when they fly on one's shoulder and their claws are likely to dig sections of cuticle out of ones hand and arms. I like my hens to be on good terms with me but I try to dispense with any of the sort of affection that inclines them to make a roosting place of my shoulders. A plain business like arrangement with the hens is good enough for me. I feed them properly and house them comfortably and make the boys keep the surroundings clean and all I ask in return is a substantial showing in the production of eggs. The minute a hen gets too old to pay her way I have some customers who are ready to welcome her, minus head and feathers, at a price which makes me glad I did not allow my personal affection for the departed to stand in the way of separating my patron from her money.

Taking care of an incubator is woman's work if ever there was any. There is nothing in the work that a woman can not do and there are a lot of things about it that a woman can do better than most men.

Rearing little chicks is another bit of work that should appeal to every well constituted woman. If ever I do get sentimental and feel like cuddling anything it is when there are a lot of little chicks to be transferred from the incubator to the brooder. And there is a great deal of pleasure to be extracted from watching a flock of young Wyandottes grow from day to day. They are such perfect little fowls from the first. They get their feathers almost at once and from the day their plumage is well started they look good enough to eat at any time.

Money in it? Certainly. Most of the work a decently strong and active woman can do and the rest of it can be turned over to the men. I would not recommend poultry keeping for women as a sanitary and health restoring business but as a money making and health preserving business it takes the lead.

### PROVED TO BE SUPERIOR.

E. O. Painter Fertilizer Co.,

Gentlemen:—I have used your Simon Pure No. 1 the past season, and it has proved to be superior to any fertilizer I have used in the past, and I expect to use it as long as you keep it up to its present standard.

E. L. Burnham.

Narcoossee, Fla., Sept. 20, 1901.